

TO SERVE AND PROTECT

BPD’s K-9 UNIT

MEET THE HARDEST WORKING DOGS IN TOWN

The canines accepted into Bloomington Police Department’s (BPD) K-9 Unit are members of an elite group of highly trained animals. Their great work ethic and high drive to succeed is as steadfast as their loyalty. Although they may look intimidating, according to their handlers, they are some of the most well-mannered canines you will ever meet.

Sergeant Jim Ousley has served as supervisor of the K-9 Unit for eight years.

“I have a lot of respect for these dogs,” he said. “It’s a great life, but working eight to 10-hour shifts and jumping in and out of squad cars isn’t easy.”



The K-9 Unit, which began in 1987, currently has six members, some coming from as far as the Czech Republic. Riggs and Hugo the Belgian Malinois, and Caine and Bosco the German shepherds, work in Patrol. Echo, a German shorthair, works as a bomb tracker at Mall of America. Breaker, a springer spaniel, works in the Narcotics Unit. The canines are most often used to search for people – both crime suspects and missing people – just don’t mistake them for bloodhounds.

“A common misconception is we give the dogs a piece of clothing belonging to a person and they run off to search for that scent,” Ousley said. “In reality, the dogs need a starting point. They pick up on disturbances in the ground and then a scent, so someone hiding in a wooded area where there is lots of ground cover is easy to find.”

Officer Mike Larson has handled two canines since he joined the K-9 Unit in 2005. His first canine, Paso, worked for an unprecedented 10 years before he passed away last spring. Larson’s new



Officers Chad Clauson, Brant Richardson, Mike Larson, Joe Spark and Mike Vonderharr pose with their canine partners.

partner, Riggs, *see left*, has been on the job since June.

“Most dogs work seven or eight years,” Larson said. “Paso loved to work, even when he developed cancer. He worked up until the day he died.”

According to Larson, tracking is a game to the dogs.

“These aren’t mean dogs, they are very friendly,” Larson said. “They enjoy tracking and receive lots of praise.”

Not only are the dogs recognized for their work, at the end of their shifts, they get to go home with their handlers. A total of 20 canines have worked for the City since the program began. Their images and years of service are recorded in a series of plaques at the police department.

With the help of a grant from the Bloomington Crime Prevention Association, the City installed an agility training course for the dogs in 2010.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE
ANNUAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP
RETREAT MOTIVATES AND
EMPOWERS YOUNG PEOPLE

The Fourth Annual Youth Leadership Retreat, for Bloomington youth ages 15 - 21, takes place **Friday, March 2, 3 - 8 p.m.**, at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road.

Sponsored by the Human Rights Commission, the event features keynote speaker Patrick Perez.

Bullied as a kid, Perez found an outlet in break dancing. His “Break Through Project” dance and leadership workshop will get students moving and teach them ways to grow their leadership skills.

Reservations are required. For more information, call 952-563-4944 V/TTY.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: YOUTH RETREAT.

STAY CONNECTED
THE ART OF SOCIAL
NETWORKING AND MEDIA

Join Human Services for a special lunch event featuring University of Minnesota Associate Professor Elizabeth Lightfoot, **Monday, March 26, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.**, at Creekside Community Center, 9801 Penn Avenue South.

Lightfoot will teach attendees about social media and its many uses. Lunch will be provided.

To register, call 952-563-4948 or 952-563-4944 V/TTY, e-mail reservations@ci.bloomington.mn.us or visit Human Services at Creekside.



SHARE YOUR CULTURE
JOIN THE GLOBAL CELEBRATION

Food vendors and entertainers representing authentic world cultures are invited to request an application form for consideration for the 5th annual Global Celebration. The event will be held **Saturday, June 16**, at Bloomington Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road.

Always a great time, attendees will enjoy a kaleidoscope of entertainment, exhibits, food, and activities for children. The event coincides with the Farmers Market and brings more than 3,000 people together in celebration each year.

For more information or to obtain an application form, call 952-563-8877 or 952-563-8740 TTY.

CORRECTION

A December *Briefing* Human Services insert article incorrectly referred to Martin Luther Care Center by its previous name, Martin Luther Manor.

HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS AND EVENTS



Sign up for Human Services’ monthly e-mail newsletters by scanning the QR code at right.



CARING FOR OUR CITIZENS

Human Services provides exceptional programs and services to community members of all ages, some of which are described below, but all of which are contained in the Human Services *Community Resource Catalog*. You can learn about housing, financial and health services, recreation opportunities, and more. Pick up your catalog at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road or Creekside Community Center, 9801 Penn Avenue South, or find it online.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: RESOURCE CATALOG.

For more information, call Human Services at 952-563-8733 or TTY 952-563-8740. To sign up for e-mail updates scan the QR code at right or go to our website, click on [E-Subscribe](#) and subscribe to “Human Services.”

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: HUMAN SERVICES.



FREE TAX PREPARATION SERVICES

HUMAN SERVICES OFFERS INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE

Tax assistance will be provided through April 14 to individuals who meet income-qualifying guidelines of \$30,000 or less for individuals and \$50,000 or less for families.

Help is provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Eligibility requirements must be met. **AccountAbility Minnesota** will only be available to provide tax assistance to qualifying individuals.

When: Tuesdays and Thursdays through April 17.
Time: 5:30 - 9:30 p.m.
When: Saturdays through April 14.
Time: 8:30 am - 1:30 pm.

AARP Tax-Aide will provide free tax preparation services for middle- to low-income taxpayers, with special attention to people age 60 and older.

When: Mondays and Tuesdays through April 17.

Time: 9 a.m. - noon.

Taxpayers with complex tax returns are advised to seek paid tax assistance.

Human Services is partnering with AccountAbility Minnesota and AARP Tax-Aide to make these programs available.

For more information, contact Human Services.



TAX FORMS AVAILABLE

Federal tax forms are available to be photocopied at Creekside.

